DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 073 064 SP 006 055

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TITLE Problems Perceived by Seventy-Five Beginning Elementary School Teachers.
PUB DATE 70
NOTE 30p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Classroom Environment; *Educational Problems; *Elementary School Teachers; Instruction; Interprofessional Relationship; *Student Teacher Relationship; *Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Attitudes

ABSTRACT

This descriptive study concerns problems in teaching as perceived by 75 beginning elementary school teachers. Two data-gathering instruments were developed: a 10-item open-ended questionnaire and a partially structured interview guide. The responses of the questionnaire were classified according to qualitative and quantitative data. The subcategories of quantitative data were problems perceived by beginning teachers, problems perceived as most urgent, sources of help, college program as related to identified problems, teachers' organizations in relation to identified problems, and sources of on-the-job satisfaction. The three subcategories of qualitative data were problem sense, adequacy, and commitment. Results show that the problems perceived by beginning teachers include (a) instruction, (b) control and attention, (c) use of materials, (d) use of time, (e) interpersonal relationships, and (f) use of space. The study also shows that (a) the administrator is the greatest source of help, (b) teachers' organizations are generally ineffective, (c) teacher-pupil interaction gives the most job satisfaction, and (d) teacher-administrator relationship is an urgent problem. The results also indicate difficulty among teachers in coping with identified problems. Also reported is a lack of self-adequacy. However, two-thirds of the teachers saw a commitment to a larger human need as related to identified problems. Ten tables of statistical results are presented.) (BRB)

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ED 073064

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# PROBLEMS PERCEIVED BY SEVENTY-FIVE BEGINNING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS*

Discussion about the problems of beginning teachers has long been a part of educational literature. In the early eighteen eighties articles such as "Some Essentials in the Development of a School System"[1]

[1] De Wolf, D.F. "Some Essentials in the Development of a School System." Addresses and Proceedings of the National Educational Association. The Association, 1881. pp. 55-63.

and "Teaching as a Business for Men"[2] appeared in professional writings.

[2] Bardeen, C.W. "Teaching as a Business for Men." Addresses and Proceedings of the National Educational Association. The Association, 1885. pp. 138-50.

More recently, problems of the neophyte teacher have been viewed and assessed by supervisors, administrators, college personnel, and educational critics; yet few studies related to the professional induction of teachers focus on problem areas as perceived by the persons most intimately concerned--the teachers themselves.

This descriptive study concerning problems perceived by seventy-five beginning elementary school teachers attempts to listen to teachers as they complete their first year of teaching in a city school system employing over 2,500 teachers, serving over 50,000 pupils, and identifiable as one of thirty-two such metropolitan school districts

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*Based on an unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Franc, Lillian H., "Problems Perceived by Seventy-five Beginning Elementary School Teachers," Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1970. Professor Alice M. Miel, Sponsor.

in the continental United States.[3]

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[3] National Education Association, Research Division. "Profile of the Metropolitan Teacher." NEA Research Bulletin 40: 70; October 1962.

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Four investigations comprise this study:

(1) What problems are perceived by beginning teachers in an urban setting?

(2) In the identification of these problems--

(a) How does the teacher report his self-involvement in relation to perceived problems in a specific school setting?

(b) How does the teacher report his self-competence in relation to the perceived problem?

(c) How does the teacher report his self-reaction in terms of linking the identified problem to larger human need--educational, social, economic?

(3) With regard to sources of help--

(a) Who are the persons perceived by first-year teachers as helping to resolve the identified problems?

(b) How do beginning teachers perceive help received from teachers' organizations during their first year of teaching?

(c) What problems identified by beginning teachers do they see as being unresolved at the end of their first year of teaching?

(4) What are the perceived sources of greatest on-the-job satisfaction during the first year of teaching?

Methodology

Two data-gathering instruments were developed--a ten-item open-ended questionnaire and a partially structured interview guide. The investigator held personal interviews with a stratified random sample of all first-year teachers who volunteered to participate in this phase of the study. The interviews, which were approximately twenty minutes in length, included two teachers from each grade level, kindergarten through grade six, and served to supplement data received in the open-ended questionnaire.

Two mailings of the questionnaire resulted in a 50 percent response from 150 beginning teachers who had taught one full school year (1968-69), had no previous teaching experience, and had a homeroom in grades K through 6. The seventy-five teacher-respondents returning usable questionnaires became the sample population of the study.

The distribution of this population of beginning teachers according to grade level taught is given in Table 1. The sample population represented forty-eight schools scattered throughout each of three geographically determined elementary sub-districts within the city school system.

TABLE 1--DISTRIBUTION OF BEGINNING TEACHERS ACCORDING TO GRADE LEVEL

| Grade | Total population | Sample population | Percent of respondents |
|---|---|---|---|
| 6 | 12 | 5 | 41.7 |
| 5 | 24 | 13 | 54.2 |
| 4 | 23 | 10 | 43.5 |
| 3 | 19 | 14 | 73.7 |
| 2 | 28 | 12 | 42.9 |
| 1 | 36 | 16 | 44.4 |
| K | 8 | 5 | 62.5 |
| | N = 150 | N = 75 | 50.0 |

A two part category system was developed as a base for the content analysis of all responses included in the seventy-five questionnaires. Part One of the category system was used to classify responses in terms of quantitative data. Part Two served as a base for the analysis of responses in relation to qualitative data.[4]

[4]Berelson, Bernard, Content Analysis in Communication Research. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1952. pp. 114-68.

Coding categories for classifying quantitative data were derived from an analysis of all responses included in fourteen randomly selected questionnaires (approximately 18 percent of the total). Original statements from the questionnaires were listed under tentative headings. These statements were then divided into thought units conveying a single idea as communicated by a word, phrase, or sentence.

Appropriate subcategories for quantitative data were developed under the following six major categories:[5]

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[5]See full text of the category system and manual in Appendix C of the complete study.

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1.0 Problems Perceived by Beginning Teachers

2.0 Problems Perceived as Most Urgent

3.0 Sources of Help

4.0 College Program in Relation to Problems Identified

5.0 Teachers' Organizations in Relation to Problems Identified

6.0 Sources of On-the-Job Satisfactions

Categories for classifying qualitative data were also derived from the analysis of responses included in fourteen randomly selected questionnaires. In developing categories for qualitative data the unit was conceptualized as a recurring theme related to various dimensions of self reaction to the problems perceived. Three such pervasive themes were identified and became the basic framework for Part Two of the category system: (1) Problem Sense, (2) Adequacy, and (3) Commitment.

In developing a measure of reliability for the two-part category system used in this study, the investigator worked with two independent judges, thus obtaining three scores for each item under consideration in both Part One and Part Two of the category system. The following formula used by Jersild and Meigs was applied:

> Number of items on which coders agree, divided by this number plus the number of items of disagreement (including items dissimilarly recorded and items noted by only one judge and omitted by the others).[6]

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[6] Jersild, Arthur T., and Meigs, Margaret F. "Direct Observation as a Research Method." Review of Educational Research 9: 477; December 1939.

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If S = Score, A = Number of Agreements, D = Number of Disagreements, this formula may be stated as follows:

$$S = \frac{A}{A + D}$$

The agreement score was computed in terms of percent, by scoring an item as an agreement if two or more judges agreed as to the coding category used.

Two reliability tests were carried out the second of which yielded acceptable agreement scores for both quantitative and qualitative data with scores of over 91 percent for each of the major categories. The results of the second reliability test are presented in Table 2.

The reliability test was not applied to the audio-taped interviews. As stated earlier the interviews were conceptualized as a method for clarifying and extending data obtained from responses to the open-ended questionnaires.

TABLE 2--PERCENT OF AGREEMENT AMONG INDEPENDENT JUDGES IN THE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF EACH MAJOR CATEGORY

| | Percent of agreement |
|---|---|
| Part I | |
| 1.0 Problems perceived | 100.0 |
| 2.0 Problems perceived as most urgent | 100.0 |
| 3.0 Sources of help | 100.0 |
| 4.0 College program in relation to problems identified | 100.0 |
| 5.0 Teachers' organizations in relation to problems identified | 100.0 |
| 6.0 Sources of on-the-job satisfactions | 98.7 |
| Part II | |
| 1.0 PS Problem sense | 100.0 |
| 2.0 PS Adequacy | 91.5 |
| 3.0 PS Commitment | 100.0 |

Results of the Study

Responses to five open-ended questions regarding problems perceived by beginning teachers were analyzed and classified under seven major areas of the first category of Part One of the coding system: Problems perceived by beginning teachers. The rank order of the seven areas according to frequency of mention is as follows:

(1) Instruction

(2) Control and attention

(3) Use of materials

(4) Use of time

(5) Interpersonal relationships

(6) Use of space

(7) Other problems perceived

Three hundred fifty-two problems were mentioned. One-third of all problems perceived were included in the area of instruction. Problems in control and attention were second in frequency of mention, claiming somewhat more than 18 percent of the total. Third most frequently mentioned were problems in the use of materials with over 15 percent of all problems mentioned falling into this category. Table 3 summarizes the findings reported above.

TABLE 3--PROBLEMS PERCEIVED BY BEGINNING TEACHERS IN SEVEN MAJOR AREAS ACCORDING TO GRADE LEVEL TAUGHT

| Problems perceived | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | F[a] | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Instruction | 5 | 24 | 29 | 29 | 11 | 13 | 8 | 119 | 33.6 |
| Control and attention | 1 | 11 | 16 | 7 | 16 | 12 | 3 | 66 | 18.8 |
| Use of material | 5 | 6 | 11 | 11 | 12 | 9 | 0 | 54 | 15.7 |
| Use of time | 3 | 6 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 10 | 2 | 45 | 12.6 |
| Interpersonal relationships | 5 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 40 | 11.2 |
| Use of space | 3 | 5 | 1 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 0 | 24 | 6.9 |
| Other | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 1.2 |
| Total | 22 | 59 | 70 | 70 | 57 | 55 | 19 | 352 | 100.0 |

[a]F in this table and hereafter is an abbreviation for Frequency.

Further analysis of responses under the seven major problem areas revealed that more than one-fourth of all problems identified (93 out of 352) were perceived by the teacher-respondents as linked to the need for development of self competence. The first-year teachers perceived themselves as least competent in the three major areas of instruction, control and attention, and the use of time. In the major area of instruction more than 50 percent of the 119 problems identified were linked to problems directly related to personal competence. Examples of comments in this subcategory are as follows:

It is hard to get ideas when starting out the first year.

I had a problem in that I overplanned taking it for granted that children would understand quickly and easily without laying a foundation based on real teaching.

Just learning to present things in an interesting fashion was difficult for me.

Table 4 summarizes results concerning problems perceived as linked to the need for development of self competence.

TABLE 4--PROBLEMS WITHIN EACH MAJOR AREA PERCEIVED AS LINKED TO NEED FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SELF COMPETENCE

| Major problem areas | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | F | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Instruction N = 119 | 4 | 15 | 14 | 18 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 63 | 17.8 |
| Control and attention N = 66 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 0 | 0 | 18 | 5.3 |
| Use of material N = 54 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Use of time N = 45 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 11 | 3.1 |
| Interpersonal relationships N = 40 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Use of space N = 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0.2 |
| Other N = 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total N = 352 | 4 | 24 | 22 | 22 | 7 | 12 | 2 | 93 | 26.4 |

An analysis of responses to the question, "Of the various problems you have identified, what one problem do you consider as most urgent

at the end of your first year of teaching?" revealed that for most teachers at every grade level at least one problem was perceived as urgent and continuing after nine months of teaching. However, in a comparative summary of general problems perceived and problems perceived as most urgent and continuing, rank order varies somewhat. While the major areas of instruction and control and attention remained first and second in order of mention, problems in interpersonal relationships moved from fifth to third in frequency of mention. The three major areas of instruction, of control and attention, and of interpersonal relationships accounted for more than 86 percent of all problems reported as most urgent. Table 5 summarizes these comparative findings.

TABLE 5--COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF GENERAL PROBLEMS PERCEIVED AND PROBLEMS PERCEIVED AS MOST URGENT RANKED ACCORDING TO SEVEN MAJOR AREAS

| Problems perceived | General | | | Most urgent | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | Percent | Rank | F | Percent | Rank |
| Instruction | 119 | 33.6 | 1 | 39 | 52.0 | 1 |
| Control and attention | 66 | 18.8 | 2 | 18 | 24.0 | 2 |
| Use of material | 54 | 15.7 | 3 | 4 | 5.3 | 4 |
| Use of time | 45 | 12.6 | 4 | 2 | 2.7 | 6 |
| Interpersonal relationships | 40 | 11.2 | 5 | 8 | 10.7 | 3 |
| Use of space | 24 | 6.9 | 6 | 3 | 4.0 | 5 |
| Other | 4 | 1.2 | 7 | 1 | 1.3 | 7 |
| Total | 352 | 100.0 | | 75 | 100.0 | |

In respect to all problems perceived by teacher-respondents as most urgent and continuing, personal competence appeared as a factor only in the two areas of instruction and of control and attention. In the major area of interpersonal relationships none of the respondents perceived themselves as having any problems with fellow teachers, and their teacher-parent problems were reduced from almost 50 percent of all general problems involving interpersonal relationships to approximately 12 percent of all such problems reported as most urgent. However, after nine months of teaching, teacher-administrator relationships were identified as the greatest source of urgent problems in the major area of interpersonal relationships accounting for over 80 percent of all problems in interpersonal relationships identified as urgent and continuing. A comparative summary of general problems perceived and problems perceived as most urgent in the major area of interpersonal relationships is presented in Table 6.

TABLE 6--COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF GENERAL PROBLEMS PERCEIVED AND PROBLEMS PERCEIVED AS MOST URGENT RANKED ACCORDING TO SUBCATEGORIES IN THE MAJOR AREA OF INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS

| Problems perceived in interpersonal relationships | General | | | Most Urgent | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | Percent | Rank | F | Percent | Rank |
| Teacher-parent | 19 | 47.5 | 1 | 1 | 12.5 | 2 |
| Teacher-administrator | 14 | 35.0 | 2 | 7 | 87.5 | 1 |
| Teacher-colleague | 7 | 17.5 | 3 | 0 | 0.0 | 3 |
| Total | 40 | 100.0 | | 8 | 100.0 | |

An analysis and classification of sources of help received revealed that teachers perceived administrators, colleagues, and self in descending order as greatest sources of help, accounting for approximately 70 percent of all help actually received. Supervisors and various publications, such as courses of study and professional literature, were also perceived as providing substantial help. Actual help from all other sources, including children, college instructors, parents, in-service courses and counselors was minimal. Orientation programs were perceived as providing no actual help in relation to problems identified. Table 7 summarizes these findings.

TABLE 7--SOURCES OF HELP RECEIVED IN RESPECT TO PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

| Sources of help | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | F | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Administrator | 5 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 2 | 14 | 1 | 56 | 30.1 |
| Colleague | 3 | 10 | 6 | 11 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 44 | 23.7 |
| Self | 3 | 8 | 8 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 31 | 16.7 |
| Supervisor | 7 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 0 | 23 | 12.4 |
| Publication | 0 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 19 | 10.2 |
| Children | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 4 | 2.1 |
| Instructor | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1.6 |
| Parent | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 1.6 |
| In-Service course | 0 | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1.1 |
| Counselor | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0.5 |
| Orientation | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 18 | 40 | 33 | 35 | 23 | 33 | 4 | 186 | 100.0 |

In response to the value of college programs in respect to preparation for coping with the problems identified, fully 50 percent of all statements indicated that preservice programs were generally ineffective in preparing teachers to cope with the problems faced during their first year of teaching. However, approximately 25 percent of all statements stressed the general effectiveness of the preservice program. In addition 10.8 percent of the comments specifically referred to the positive value of student teaching. As indicated in Table 8, findings are based on 93 comments as reported by 72 respondents. Three respondents omitted answers to this question.

TABLE 8--VALUE OF COLLEGE PROGRAM IN RESPECT TO COPING WITH PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

| Value of college program | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | F | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ineffective | 4 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 3 | 47 | 50.5 |
| Effective | 2 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 23 | 24.7 |
| Positive value of student teaching | 0 | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 10.8 |
| Positive value of specific courses | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 10 | 10.8 |
| Doubtful | 0 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 3.2 |
| Total | 6 | 22 | 12 | 18 | 14 | 12 | 9 | 93 | 100.0 |

As indicated in Table 9, only 8 percent of all respondents perceived themselves as receiving specific help from teachers' organizations in coping with identified problems, and 2.7 percent of all respondents were doubtful as to help received, while the largest

proportion (76.0 percent) perceived the teachers' organizations as ineffective aids in coping with the identified problems.

TABLE 9--VALUE OF HELP RECEIVED FROM TEACHERS' ORGANIZATIONS IN RESPECT TO COPING WITH PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

| Value of help received | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | F | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ineffective | 3 | 11 | 9 | 13 | 6 | 12 | 3 | 57 | 76.0 |
| Specified help received | 1 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 8.0 |
| Doubtful | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2.7 |
| No response | 1 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 10 | 13.3 |
| Total | 5 | 16 | 12 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 5 | 75 | 100.0 |

One hundred eighteen experiences were described in responses given to the question, "What do you consider as your most satisfying professional experience during this past year?" More than 50 percent of these responses indicated that teachers found their greatest professional satisfaction in fostering child growth and development. In addition, 21.2 percent of all responses pointed to professional satisfactions linked to the development of teacher-pupil relationships. Thus, almost 73 percent of all responses were concerned with positive first-year experiences related directly to the pupil. Findings in respect to most satisfying first-year professional experiences are summarized in Table 10.

TABLE 10--MOST SATISFYING PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCES

| Source of satisfaction | K | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | F | Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Child growth and development | 4 | 18 | 9 | 14 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 61 | 51.7 |
| Teacher-pupil relationship | 1 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 25 | 21.2 |
| Personal professional growth | 2 | 0 | 2 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 19 | 16.1 |
| Staff relationships | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 9 | 7.6 |
| Parent-teacher interaction | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 3.4 |
| Total | 12 | 23 | 18 | 27 | 16 | 15 | 7 | 118 | 100.0 |

As stated earlier, a second category system was used to make an analysis of all responses of first-year teachers in respect to their initial experiences as related to Problem Sense, Adequacy, and Commitment. Problem Sense was defined as reported self reaction in respect to coping with a given problem situation as perceived in a specific school setting. Adequacy was defined as reported self competence as perceived in relation to the problem identified. Commitment was defined as reported self reaction in terms of linking the identified problem to larger human need--whether educational, social, or economic. Findings in these three major areas are reported separately for lower elementary school teachers, teaching kindergarten through grade three, and for upper elementary school teachers, teaching grades four through six. Analysis of responses resulted in

findings that are essentially similar for lower and upper elementary school teachers.

In the area of Problem Sense both lower and upper elementary school teachers perceived no problem in approximately one third of all questions in which they were given an opportunity to state a problem. Further, relatively few teacher-respondents who perceived problems attributed blame to circumstances or to other persons in relation to the problems identified. However, approximately 20 percent of both the lower and upper elementary school teachers proposed either general or specific methods of coping with problems through personal involvement or reported personal experiences of on-the-job solutions to problems perceived. Table 11 presents a summary of these findings.

Findings in the major area of Adequacy are based on fifty-six questionnaires, rather than seventy-five, since nineteen questionnaires made no reference to personal competence or self-adequacy in any response within a given questionnaire. In the fifty-six questionnaires analyzed in respect to Adequacy 120 references to personal competence were coded. Over 50 percent of these responses indicated an awareness of personal inadequacy in coping with identified problems but made no suggestions as to the development of personal adequacy. However, in the subcategory under Adequacy, reporting personal past experience of on-the-job growth in adequacy, six times as many lower elementary school teachers perceived themselves as experiencing such growth in adequacy during their first year of teaching as did the upper elementary school respondents. This subcategory showed the greatest difference in responses between the lower and upper elementary school teachers for all

TABLE 11--PROBLEM SENSE AS INFERRED FROM RESPONSES OF LOWER ELEMENTARY AND UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

| Indicators | Lower elementary | | Upper elementary | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | Percent | F | Percent |
| Sees no problem | 155 | 32.2 | 92 | 32.1 |
| Sees problem in life space | 123 | 25.5 | 76 | 26.5 |
| Sees problem; places blame on others and/or circumstances | 60 | 12.5 | 43 | 15.0 |
| Sees problem; proposes general method of coping by others or by administrative change without personal involvement | 48 | 10.0 | 19 | 6.6 |
| Sees problem; proposes general or specific method of future effort in coping by personal involvement | 61 | 12.5 | 44 | 15.4 |
| Sees problem; reports personal past experience of on-the-job steps toward solution | 35 | 7.3 | 12 | 4.1 |
| Total | 482 | 100.0 | 286 | 100.0 |

subcategories in the three major areas of Problem Sense, Adequacy, or Commitment. Table 12 summarizes findings pertaining to Adequacy as self reported by lower and upper elementary school teacher-respondents.

Since twenty-seven respondents made no reference to personal commitment, findings in the major area of Commitment are based on forty-eight questionnaires. Inspection of Table 13 reveals that the two groups of teachers (lower elementary and upper elementary school teachers) again correspond closely in proportion of responses given under the various subcategories of the area of Commitment. The largest single subcategory of responses (almost 40 percent for each teacher group) indicated an awareness of human need with a proposed specific course of action related to solution of problems to be carried out by others or by administrative change. However, this large proportion of responses was balanced by an equally large number of comments indicating personal positive involvement either as already experienced or as proposed future action. By combining responses coded under these two indicators, somewhat more than 40 percent of all responses referring to Commitment fell into these two subcategories for both the lower elementary and the upper elementary teacher-respondents.

A relatively small number of responses, four for both lower and upper elementary school teachers, made reference to teacher preparation programs as linked to the development of awareness of human need.

The fourteen twenty-minute audio-taped interviews further substantiated the findings in all of the major areas of this study. Few responses given in any of the fourteen interviews contradicted the reported findings based on the content analysis of the written responses

TABLE 12--ADEQUACY AS INFERRED FROM RESPONSES OF LOWER ELEMENTARY AND UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

| Indicators | Lower elementary F | Lower elementary Percent | Upper elementary F | Upper elementary Percent |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Aware of inadequacy; makes no suggestion related to the development of adequacy | 44 | 50.6 | 22 | 66.7 |
| Aware of inadequacy; reports positive personal preservice experience related to development of adequacy | 7 | 8.0 | 4 | 12.1 |
| Aware of inadequacy; suggests general intent of future self-improvement | 7 | 8.0 | 2 | 6.1 |
| Aware of inadequacy; proposes specific action related to development of adequacy | 12 | 13.8 | 4 | 12.1 |
| Aware of inadequacy; reports personal past experience of on-the-job growth in adequacy | 17 | 19.6 | 1 | 3.0 |
| Total | 87 | 100.0 | 33 | 100.0 |

TABLE 13--COMMITMENT AS INFERRED FROM RESPONSES OF LOWER ELEMENTARY AND UPPER ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

| Indicators | Lower elementary | | Upper elementary | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | Percent | F | Percent |
| Aware of human need; describes circumstances without prescription for action | 12 | 15.8 | 5 | 13.2 |
| Aware of human need; links development of concern to teacher preparation | 3 | 3.9 | 1 | 2.6 |
| Aware of human need; proposes general or specific course of action to be carried out by others or by administrative change | 30 | 39.5 | 15 | 39.5 |
| Aware of human need; proposes personal positive course of action in response to need | 25 | 32.9 | 14 | 36.8 |
| Aware of human need; reports specific instance of past expenditure of personal resources to meet need | 6 | 7.9 | 3 | 7.9 |
| Total | 76 | 100.0 | 38 | 100.0 |

to ten open-ended questions in seventy-five questionnaires.

Discussion

While one cannot make general inferences in respect to all first-year teacher populations on the basis of this descriptive study, a number of tentative implications concerning supervision[7] of beginning

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[7] In this discussion the term supervision is used in reference to both administrative and supervisory personnel responsible for helping first-year teachers.

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teachers and the preservice education of teachers is suggested by the data.

Implications concerning both supervision and preservice teacher education programs are discussed in relation to the following six topics:

(1) Problems of beginning teachers

(2) Help sought and received by beginning teachers

(3) Personal professional satisfactions

(4) Self-reports concerning Problem Sense

(5) Self-reports concerning Adequacy

(6) Self-reports concerning Commitment

Although several research studies concerning problems of beginning teachers identify control of pupils as the primary problem of the

beginning elementary school teacher,[8,9,10] this present study shows

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[8]Barr, A.S., and Rudisill, Mabel. "Inexperienced Teachers Who Fail -- and Why." Nations Schools 5: 30; February 1930.

[9]Stout, John B. "Deficiencies of Beginning Teachers." Journal of Teacher Education 3: 44; March 1952.

[10]Tower, Melvin M. "Study of Problems of Beginning Teachers in the Indianapolis Public Schools." Educational Administration and Supervision 43: 267; April 1956.

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that the seventy-five teacher-respondents perceived most problems in the major area of instruction. Control and attention was second in order of frequency of problem situations mentioned.

On the basis of these findings supervisors might well consider helping the beginning teacher solve problems directly related to instructional practice. Also, in the field of preservice teacher education more time could be given to answering the question, "How can the beginning teacher be more adequately prepared to cope with identified problems of instruction?"

Further analysis of the findings concerning problems of the beginning teacher indicate that teacher-administrator relationships account for over 87 percent of all problems mentioned as urgent and continuing in the major area of interpersonal relationships. While data obtained from this study does not directly reveal causes of problems perceived, the following illustrative comments taken both from the audio-taped interviews and from the questionnaires point to the possibility of some degree of over-expectancy on the part of supervisory personnel in respect to the performance of beginning teachers:

> I refused to accept the sponsorship of the Safety Council. I felt this was just asking too much of a first-year teacher.
>
> I felt just like a person not knowing how to swim being thrown into the pool. This is exactly how it felt here. I was just thrown into a rather "bad" sixth grade classroom. I just had to swim and fight for myself.
>
> We had one in-service meeting on the new reading program in the middle of October. We were told that by that time we should have been doing this, and this, and this. But we had no idea what we were supposed to do.

Further, it would appear that beginning teachers would also be helped if specific detailed study of mutual responsibilities of teachers and principals were included in the preservice education of teachers.

In respect to help sought and received by the beginning teacher, findings in this present study point to the administrator as the greatest source of actual help. This is contrary to reported findings of earlier studies,[11,12,13] in which colleagues were perceived as the chief

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[11] National Education Association, Research Division. "First-Year Teachers in 1954-55." NEA Research Bulletin 34: 34; February 1956.

[12] Whitman, Robert L. "Fears of Beginning Teachers." Ohio Schools 44: 44; September 1966.

[13] Hermanowicz, Henry J. "The Pluralistic World of the Beginning Teacher." The Real World of the Beginning Teacher. Washington, D.C.: National Commission on Teacher Education and Professional Standards, 1966. p.20.

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source of help. Interestingly, college related personnel were considered as an actual source of help by only three teachers.

It may be that these findings are of some significance for supervisors. The data show that neophyte teachers perceive themselves as needing help and that as first-year teachers they are willing to

receive help from persons who, like the principal, are capable of giving help and are available to the beginning teacher in the on-the-job situation. The relatively few statements which indicated help received from college-based personnel may be linked to the reality that help from this source, while needed, is presently just not available to first-year teachers. The situation described is in itself a commentary on the present clear break between preservice and in-service education. There is a need for the development of workable procedures (such as a weekly college seminar) in which school and college personnel assume mutual responsibility for helping the first-year teacher.

In regard to help received from teachers' organizations, 76 percent of the teacher respondents perceived teachers' organizations as ineffective aids in coping with problems identified. If the long-term goal of a unified profession is to be realized in which various segments of the profession, including teachers' organizations, are to assume mutual responsibility for the conduct of members (including the induction of teachers into the profession), it may well be that supervisors need to be ready to offer guidelines whereby teachers' organizations can more actively cooperate with supervisory personnel in helping the first-year teacher.

Seventy-three percent of 118 experiences described by respondents in respect to personal professional satisfactions were found to be directly related to teacher-pupil interaction. For supervisors this finding points to one possible approach to the initial development of a working relationship between supervisor and neophyte teacher: that is the possibility of working cooperatively in planning for pupil growth

and development. For preservice programs it would appear that the possibility of increasing opportunities for early direct experiences with children, including volunteer participation in such programs as day care centers, hospitals and children's camps, would be both a meaningful and satisfying experience for the future teacher.

In the major dimension of Problem Sense, a wide range of responses to problems perceived was apparent. Responses were dispersed throughout every subcategory. However, a relatively small number of responses reported steps toward personal on-the-job solutions to problems perceived--7.3 percent for lower elementary school teachers and 4.1 percent for upper elementary school teachers. These results do indicate some lack on the part of beginning teachers in the capacity to cope with the problems they identify.

It would appear, then, that supervisors need to be aware not only of the range and variety of possible responses to problems perceived, but also to observe and analyze, if possible, coping behavior exhibited by those teachers who perceive themselves as moving toward on-the-job solutions of reported problems. Such an analysis could prove helpful in developing deeper insights in working with other beginning teachers facing similar problems.

Within teacher education programs, the study of coping behavior could very well become a major element in the study of the total teaching act, taking into consideration such aspects as awareness of problems, appropriateness and variety of response to problems, and effectiveness of the teaching behavior exhibited as it influences individual learning.

Approximately 75 percent of all teacher-respondents perceived one or more problems as related to lack of self-adequacy, reporting a total of 120 such problem situations. Interestingly, only eleven of the 120 identified problems were reported as associated with a positive preservice experience relating to the development of personal adequacy, and none of the teacher-respondents perceived themselves as receiving help through in-service orientation procedures.

On the basis of these findings supervisors might well reappraise orientation programs with respect to problems perceived by beginning teachers, developing as a result more relevant orientation procedures. It would also appear that preservice teacher educators should be alive to the current classroom problems of the neophyte teacher, devoting much time to the development of a base for solving such problems.

In respect to Commitment, approximately two-thirds of all respondents made some reference to an awareness of larger human need as related to the problems identified. Almost 40 percent of such responses proposed action leading to change to be carried out by others or by administrative procedures. As stated earlier, another equally large segment of responses reported past expenditures of personal resources to meet human needs or proposed a future personal positive course of action in response to identified need.

It would appear that for supervisors interested in working with curriculum change and improvement, this finding is meaningful in that while many beginning teachers looked to others for solutions to problems linked to human need, an equally large number proposed personal involvement in the solution of such problems. Teachers representative

of this latter group could form the nucleus of future change agents moving toward improvement of instruction in our schools.

In conclusion, the findings of this study point to the need for future research related to the continuing critical examination of the following basic question: How can the first year of actual teaching practice be planned for and structured so as to contribute to the professional development of the neophyte teacher?

Roy A. Edelfelt, in an article entitled, "The Supervisor's Part in Educating the New Teacher," proposes the training of persons who are to become specialists in the problems of the beginning teacher.[14] This is needed. However, if the first year of teaching experience is to contribute to the total career development of the neophyte teacher, research involving both school and college personnel in the critical examination of what really happens in the classroom during that first year is imperative.

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[14] Edelfelt, Roy A. "The Supervisor's Part in Educating the New Teacher." Educational Leadership 24: 150; November 1966.

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